

## SPAIN AND ITS PROTESTANT MISSIONS.

Spain at present is attracting very general attention on account of its religious as well as its political condition, and we are sure that many of our friends will read with much attention the following able remarks on "Spain and its Protestant Missions" from the pages of the *United Presbyterian Missionary Record* :

Another visit to Spain, with renewed opportunities of observation and of fellowship with many of the excellent men who are working in different parts, naturally suggests a few remarks, which we proceed to submit to the attention of our readers. As we left that country by the north, having entered by Gibraltar and Cadiz, we may state that although the Government troops had been driven back by the Carlist rebels, and had lost their general in connection with the repulse, nothing was known of this reverse at Santander when we left that port for Bayonne. Indeed, it is very difficult to obtain at once, in Spain, any reliable intelligence regarding military movements. Both parties use the telegraph as if it were a legitimate arm of war; and when so used, its messages are sometimes shaped according to the end in view, just as the missiles for their rifles are manufactured with a view to effective discharge on the point to be carried; and hence the state of matters in the scene of struggle between the Carlists and the Government is often more quickly understood by any common reader of newspapers anywhere else in Europe than anywhere in Spain. Carlism is unable to strike a direct blow at the heart of the nation. It cannot dream of assailing Madrid, but it festers like a local ulcer on the extremities. It lurks and festers there, and inasmuch as the heart is diseased and feeble, it fatally drains strength from the whole sluggish body politic of Spain.

It is a country which awakens profound compassion in the heart of any one who passes through it, by its railway lines or diligence routes, or through those by-paths where rich vineyards alternate with ruined fortresses, dilapidated villages, and with these caves in which gipsy peasants contrive to burrow and live. The rural people are a highly interesting class, generally transparent, ready to respond to any feeling of trust with which they may be treated; full of endless and voluble conversation; polite to a degree which seems ludicrous according to the ruder and rougher standard prevalent in Scotland; and, it must be added, vengeful when their suspicion and anger are aroused, and ready sometimes to express their vengeance by drawing from hidden pockets long curved knives with sharp points, the sight of which is more uncomfortable than of an unsheathed sword. These implements we confess never to have seen used for any purpose worse than that of hewing slices from purple-coloured sausages, plentifully spiced with garlic.

A considerable proportion of the area of Spain is so rocky or sandy as scarcely to be fit for cultivation, yet it is distressing to see huge spaces of the country, capable of yielding rich produce, abandoned to comparative barrenness. Practicable methods of irrigation, such as have successfully been introduced into parts of India, might redeem vast tracts of land in the Peninsula from comparative aridity and unproductiveness, and turn them into fruitful gardens; for in that climate many of the most precious fruits will grow, if you but give them hold of the soil and supply them with moisture. From sheer want of enterprise whole landscapes are left bare, and weary the eye for want of trees, which an industrious cultivation might quickly rear so as to convert arid plains into comparative verdure. How are these circumstances to be accounted for? From no inherent incapacity